THE POORE Doubting CHRISTIAN Drawne to CHRIST.

Wherein the maine letts and hindrances which keepe men from comming to Christ are discovered.

With speciall helps to recover Gods favour.

Ho, every one that thirsteth, drinke of the waters of life, and he that hath no money, come buy and eate freely.

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THE POORE DOVBTING CHRISTIAN drawne unto Christ.

JOHN 6.45.

Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, commeth unto me.

THere are divers lets and impediments which hinder poore

Christians from comming unto Christ, all which I desire to reduce to these following heads.

First, such hinderances as really keepe men from comming to take hold of Christ at all, which are briefly these.

Lets which hinder mé from comming to Christ.

1. Blinde carelesnesse, or presumptuous security, whereby men content themselves in their present condition, presuming all is well with them, when there is no such matter.

2. Being convinced of this, they bethinke how to save themselves by their own strength, & therupon set upon a reformation of life, thinking to make God amends by reforming some

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some sinnes which they heare themselves reproved of by the Ministers.

3. The sinner being convinced of his utter inability to please God in himselfe, at length gets up a stayre higher, and sees all his performances, & prayers, and duties, to be of no power in themselves, but that he must leave all, and cleave onely unto Christ by faith; and this he thinks hee can doe well enough, and so thrusts himselfe upon Christ, thinking all the worke is then done, and no more to bee looked after.

4. If hee sees this failes him too, then he goes yet further, and confesseth he

cannot come to Christ except Christ give him his hand, and helpe him up: therefore now hee will attend upon the ordinances, and labour and bestirre himselfe hard, in the use of all good meanes, conceiuing thereby to hammer out at last, a *faith* of his own to make him happie. And here hee rests, hanging as it were upon the out side of the Arke, so long till at last the waves and windes growing fierce and violent, hee is beaten off from his hold, and so sinkes for ever.

Besides these, there are other kindes of hindrances which doe not indeed deprive a man of title and interest

tereſt to eternall happi-neſſe, but make the way tedious & uncomfortable, ſo that he cannot come to Chriſt ſo readily, as he deſires and longs to doe; the ground whereof, is this, when men out of carnall reaſon contrive another way to come unto Chriſt, than ever hee ordained or revealed, when we ſet up a ſtandard by Gods Standard, and out of our owne imagination make another condition of beleeving than ever Chriſt required or ordained. Thus wee make barres in the way, and manacle our hands, and fetter our feet, and then we complaine wee cannot goe: thus it is with you

poore Christians, and the fault is your owne. Now amongst many there bee three hinderances which are chiefly to bee observed, by which many gracious hearts are marvellously hindered from comming to, and from receiving that comfort from Christ, which they might, and hee is willing to bestow.

Three main hindrances which keepe men from Christ.

I First, the distressed soule being happily truely humbled, takes notice of the beauty of holinesse, and the Image of God stampt upon the hearts of his children, and of all those precious promises which God hath made to all that are his; now the soule seeing these,

theſe, begins thus to reaſon with himſelfe, and ſaith, Surely if I were ſo holy and ſo gracious, then I might have hope to receive the pardon of my ſinnes; for were my heart ſo enlarged to duties, and could my heart be ſo carried with power againſt my corruptions to maſter them, then there were ſome hope; but when I have no power againſt ſin, nor any heart to ſeeke ſo importunatly for a Chriſt, how dare I thinke that any mercy belongs to me, having ſo many wants? thus they dare not come to the promiſe, and they will not venture upon it, becauſe they have not that inlarge-

ment to duties, and that power against corruption which sometimes the Saints of God have.

But we must know this doth not hinder, we make it a hinderance, when in truth it is none; for observe it, we must not think to bring enlargement and hope to the promise, but wee must goe to the promise for them; hope must be stirred, and desire quickned, and love and joy kindled by the promise; who made this a condition of the *covenant*, that a man must have so much enlargement before he come to the promise? our *Saviour* requires no portion, but meere poverty and empti-

emptineſſe: if thou haſt nothing he will have thee, provided that thou wilt have him; *The rich he ſends empty away*, but the poore is ſatisfied, and the thirſty refreſhed: there is nothing required on our ſide, but onely to receive him as a husband: *Buy without money*, ſaith the text; you muſt not thinke to come and buy a husband; the Lord lookes for no power or ſufficiency of our ſelves, no power againſt corruption, nor enlargement to duties; if you will be content that Chriſt ſhall take all from you, and diſpoſe of you, then, take a Saviour and have him.

Luk. 1. 53.

Eſay. 55. 1.

But the poore ſoule ſaith,

Queſt.

saith, If I goe thus hudwinked, how shall I know that I doe not presume, and how shall I know that I have a true title to the promise.

Answ. I answere, there is no better argument in the world that thou hast an interest in Christ, than this, thy taking of the Lord Christ as a Saviour wholly, and as a husband. *Ioh.* 1. 12. *As many as received him, to them hee gave power to be the sonnes of God, even to them that beleeve on his name.* He doth not say, to as many as had such enlargement in duties, and such power against corruptions; but if thou wilt take Christ upon those termes

termes which hee offers himſelfe, there is no better argument under heaven, that thou haſt a title to the promiſe. There is a deſperate deſpaire that often ſeazeth upon the hearts of diſtreſſed ſinners.

Therefore in the ſecond 2
place, as the ſinner lookes upon the excellencie of Chriſt, and grace, and his owne inſufficiencie, and ſo will not venture upon the promiſe, ſo he lookes upon his own ſinfulneſſe and worthleſneſſe, and therefore dares not venture upon mercy; hee viewes the number of his ſinnes ſo many & vile, and the continuance of them ſo long, and hee ſeeth the floods of abomi-

abominations comming in amaine upon his ſoule, and Sathan helps him forwards hereto; for this is the policie of the devill, that, if he can, he will make a man that hee ſhall never ſee his ſinne, but ſay, there is mercie enough in a Saviour, and therefore I may live as I liſt: but when the ſinner will needes ſee his ſin, then hee will let him ſee nothing but ſinne; the one that he may preſume, and the other that he may deſpaire.

Now the poore ſinner ſtayes here; tell him of the mercy of God, and of the plentious redemption in Chriſt, and of the riches of the freeneſſe of Gods grace,

grace, What, saith hee, should I thinke that there is any mercy for mee, and that I have any interest in Christ; that were strange? And thus the soule is here poring, and fastned, and setled upon his corruption, and is ever stirring the wound, and never goes to the Physitian: For a man is as well kept frõ looking to Christ by despaire, as by presumption; before hee sees his sinne, he thinks his condition is good, and he hath a sufficiencie of his owne, and needs not goe to Christ; and when hee sees his sinne, then hee beholds so much vilenesse in himselfe that he dares not goe to Christ, lest when he

he goes before him, hee ſend him downe to the pit. Herein the devill is very ſubtill; but this doth not hinder our title to Chriſt, neither ought it to diſcourage our hearts from laying hold on ſalvation.

For firſt, (obſerve it) for whom did Chriſt come into the world, & for whom did hee die when hee was come? it was not for the *righteous*, that needed him not, but for the *poore ſinner* that condemnes himſelfe, and knowes hee cannot ſave himſelf. *Paul* ſaith, *Chriſt Ieſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, of whom I am the chiefe:* and *Zach.* 13. 1. *There is a fountaine opened for ſinne, and*

1 Tim. 1. 15.

for

for uncleanneſſe, that is, for all ſorts of ſinnes, and for all kind of ſinners: be their iniquities never ſo great, and never ſo vile, there is a fountaine ſet open, come who will; there was never any ſaved but a Rebell, and never any man received to mercy. but hee that oppoſed the mercy of God, and his grace in Chriſt. The fiery Serpents did ſting the people in the wilderneſſe, but there was a brazen Serpent to heale them.

Obſerve the folly of this plea: what Scripture ever ſaid that the greatneſſe of mans ſinne could hinder the greatneſſe of Gods mercy? no Scripture reveales

veales this, we see *David* prayeth the contrary, *Have mercy upon me O Lord, and pardon my sinnes, for they are great:* Nay, God himselfe doth the quite contrary, *Isa.* 43. 24, 25. *Thou hast made mee serve with thy sins, and wearied mee with thine iniquities, yet I am hee that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my names sake.* When the Jewes did tire GOD with their distempers, and burthened him with their sinfull courses, then the Lord for his owne names sake would not so much as remember their iniquities against them.

Psal. 25. 11

Againe observe, that sinnes though they be never so haynous of themselves,

ſelves, yet if the ſoule can ſee them, and the heart be burthened withthem, they are ſo farre from hinde-ring the work of faith, and frō making thee uncapable of mercy, that they fit thee to goe to Chriſt: The truth is, (which I pray you take notice of) it is not properly our unworthi-neſſe, but our pride and haughtineſſe that hinders us from cōming to Chriſt; for wee would have ſome thing in our ſelves, and not have all from Chriſt. Take the diſtreſſed ſoule that ſees the vileneſſe of his ſinnes: ſuppoſe thy ſinnes were fewer, nevertheleſſe even then thou goeſt not to Chriſt, becauſe thou art perſwa-

perſwaded of the freeneſſe of his grace, but becauſe thou haſt a worthineſſe in thy ſelfe, & wouldſt bring ſomething to Chriſt, and not receive all from him: Therefore it is thy pride, and thy ſelfe-conceitedneſſe that hinders thee, thou muſt have thus much grace and holineſſe, and Chriſt muſt not juſtifie the ungodly, but the godly man; I tell thee, then he will never juſtifie a man while the world ſtands.

Obiect. But the ſoule replies againe, My ſins are worſe, not onely becauſe they are many, but becauſe of the mercy and ſalvation that I have rejected, which hath beene

beene offered mee from day to day.

This hinders not, provided that thou canst see those evils of thine: though thou hast cast away the kindnesse of the Lord, yet the Lord wil not cast away thee, if thou wilt come and seeke him earnestly againe: *For the iniquity of his covetousnesse I was wroth* (saith God) *and I smote him, I hid my selfe, and hee went on frowardly in the way of his owne heart.* If this could have hindred, *Iudah* should never have received mercie; but the text saith, I have seene his wayes, and will heale him; *Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet turne againe to me,*

Answ.

Esa 57.17, 18.

Ier .3.1.

me, saith the Lord. There is no time past if a man have but a heart to returne; there is no limitation of the riches of Gods free grace, except the sin against the holy Ghost, *Rev.*3.20.*I stand at the doore and knock*; though hee crie til he be hoarse,& stand til he be weary, yet he stands still: if any adulterous or deceitfull wretch will open, the Lord will come in, and bring comfort, and sup with him.

Object. Oh, that is true, saith the poore soule, had I but a heart to mourne for my baseneſſe; see my sinnes I doe, but this is my misery, I cannot bee burthened with them, I have a heart that

that cannot breake and mourne for dishonouring of God.

This hinders not neither, provided that thy heart is weary of it selfe, that it cannot be weary of sinne: *The Lord shewes mercie because he will shew mercie*, it is not becausse thou canst please him, but becausse mercy pleaseth him. When did the Lord shew mercy to *Paul*, even then when *Paul* did expresse most malice against him; *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou mee?* hee persecutes Christ, and yet Christ pities him, and shewes him mercy; & so the churlish *Iaylor*, when he was most opposite against the means of

Answ.

Mich. 7. 18

Acts.

of grace, the Lord shewed then most compassion upon him; he that before resisted the meanes of grace, was now brought home by those meanes.

Obiect. But woe, saith the poore soule, you are now come to the quicke; this very word is like a Milstone about my neck, to sinke my soule for ever; for this is the depth of that baseneſſe that lies on me, that all the meanes doe not better me. Why, though *Paul* and the Jaylor were bad enough, yet they were made better by the meanes; but this is my hopeleſſe condition, that the meanes of grace prevaile not on mee. Is there such a heart in hell

as

as I; how ill muſt I needs be, when all the meanes in the world will doe me no good? but, me thinks, I feele my heart more hard and ſtubborne under all Gods Ordinances; my condition is certainly hopeleſſe, when the means that ſhould ſoften me, doe but harden me, and make me worſe.

Anſw. This is the laſt plea whereby the devill holds down the heart of a poore ſinner; but let me anſwer thee, this hinders not neither, but that at leaſt thou maiſt have hope of mercy, therefore obſerve three paſſages by way of anſwer.

First, the Word and 1

meanes of grace doe work good, if it make thee more ſenſible of thy hardneſſe and deadneſſe, though happily it worke not that good, and after the ſame manner that thou deſireſt, yet if it make thee ſee thy baſeneſſe, and hardneſſe of heart, and dulneſſe, in regard of that body of death which hangs upon thee; then the word works in the beſt manner, becauſe it is after Gods manner, howſoever not after thine: That Phyſick works moſt kindly, that makes the party ſick before it works; ſo it is with the Word; thou haſt a proud heart, and lifteſt up thy ſelfe in thine owne abilities, and truſteſt

truſteſt in thine owne ſtrength, and thinkeſt that thy care and improvement of the meanes would work wonders; but now the Word works ſweetly, whē it makes thee apprehenſive, that a wounded ſoule is the gift of God, not of man, nor of the meanes; and therefore the Word makes thee looke to God for it, and to prize it when thou haſt it; and the Word makes thee looke to God to continue it; to feele deadneſſe is life, and to feele hardneſſe is ſoftneſſe; onely remember this one Caution, except there be ſome luſt or diſtemper that thy heart hankers after, for then the

Caution.

Word will harden thee, becauſe thou hardeneſt thy ſelfe.

2 Secondly, (marke this I beſeech you) thou art the cauſe why thy heart is not ſoftned, & why the Word works not upon thy ſoule; the diſtemper of thy owne heart hinders the working of the Word, and diſpenſation of Gods providence, and the tenour of the Covenant of Grace; thou muſt not thinke to limit the Holy One of Iſrael, for it is a Covenant of Grace; the Lord will not ſtand bent to thy bow, and give thee grace when thou wilt; it is not for us to know the times & ſeaſons. What if the Lord will not give

give thee grace this yeare, nor the next, nor all thy life, if at the laſt gaſpe he wil drop in a little favor, it is more than he owes thee, therefore heare to day, and waite to morrow, and continue ſo doing, becauſe thou knoweſt not when God may bleſſe his owne Ordinances; & complaine not of delayes, but waite, for God hath waited for you long, and therefore if he make you waite for peace of conſcience, and aſſurance of his love, the Lord deales equally with you, and as ſhall be beſt for you; God gives what, and when, and how he wil, therefore waite for it.

Wayte for mercy.

Thirdly, know and con- 3

Rest not upon duties.

sider, that thou hast rested upon thine owne duties and endeavours, and thou doest not goe to God, that blesseth both the meanes and endeavours; the fault is thine owne, (I say) because thou restest in thine owne performances, and in the power of the means that thou apprehendest, and doest not goe to God, that would have wrought more than all these: for did a man depend upon Gods power and mercy in his Ordinances, hee should alwayes finde some proportionable succour, as well when he findes no successe, as when he findes any; for God sometimes gives, and sometimes delayes, but Gods

Gods love is as constant when he gives not, as when he gives. Therefore labour to get out from all carnall confidence in holy duties, and rest not in thy performances, but looke beyond all duties to God, and desire him to give thee successe above them.

Many a man makes his services, his *Saviours*. Hee makes them the bottome to beare up his conscience, the ground whereof is this: Happily he finds and feeles by wofull experience, what the fruits of sinne are. Hee sees the venome of his corruptions, and the lamentable effects of all his sinful practises. Hee thought it before a fine thing to

sweare, and lye, and drink, and follow base company, but now they are gravell to his heart, and gall to his soule. His conscience flyeth in his face, and hee is ready to sink down to hell. *Conscience* saith, these be thy sinnes, and these will be thy damnation, they have beene thy delight, but they will prove thy shame and confusion in the end, thou shalt shortly finde the smart of them. To hell; away be packing.

Now this man hath no cure for his conscience but this, hee entreates *Conscience* to be quiet, hee confesseth hee hath lived in base courses, and his condition is very miserable, but

but now hee will reforme all; hee hath neglected *prayer* heretofore, but now he will pray; he hath hated Gods servants, but now hee will love them, his wayes have beene exceeding evill, but now hee will reforme them, hee begins to turne a new leafe now, and thinks that will serve the turn. Thus many poore soules use *the meanes* as *Mediators*, and so fall short of Christ. A gracious heart doth not onely *pray*, and *heare*, and *receive*, and use all possible meanes to obtaine Christ, but he is restlesse and unsatisfied till hee enjoy and possesse Christ in the meanes. Hee rests not upon the bare perfor-

mance of any duty, neither thinks by vertue of any of his endeavours, to obtaine a part in Christ.

I will expresse this particular more fully in this manner. A rich Usurer that is sicke of some disease, tell him such a Physitian can cure him, but he stands upon state, he will not come without a great deale of charge: Charge (saith he) I doe not stand upon that. I have money enough by me, *that* will fetch him hither. Such a man now placeth all his confidence in his money. So when the soule sees the guilt of sinne is not removed, and *conscience* is still snarling, and the *law* con-

condemning him, and Christ is the onely Saviour, that can satisfie and cure all. But how shall Christ be procured? Why his *prayer*, and *fasting*, and *performances* wil command him, by the power and merit of the worke done, though he hath no *promise* for it, and so by resting on his owne performances, falls short of Christ and salvation.

Oh, saith a poore sinner, I would goe out of my selfe, and I see I rest upon my duties, but I cannot get out of my selfe. *Object.*

I answer, it is Sathans subtilty to keepe us in our selves here too, by endeavouring to make us goe out *Answ.*

out of our selves by our owne strength; and this is a mervailous depth of malice and cunning in the devill, when he makes us beleeve (and we out of ignorance are deluded) that we have power in our owne hands to goe out of our selves; no, it is a supernaturall worke, and the same hand must bring us out of our selves, that must bring us to Christ: This is in truth *selfe-deniall*, when the soule knoweth it hath nothing, and therefore is over-powerd with the mighty hand of God, and the worke of his Spirit, so that the poore sinner doth not so much as expect any power or ability in himselfe,

Selfe-deniall what it is.

ſelfe, or from the creature, in the doing of any duty; hee knowes he is dead, and therfore cannot help himſelfe, much leſſe can the creature doe him good, and therefore he lookes to heaven, and ſeekes all ſufficiencie from God alone. For (obſerve it) whiles that I thus thinke with my ſelfe, that I have ability to goe out of my ſelfe, I doe not then ſay, that I have a principle within me to denie my ſelfe, which is quite contrary, for to denie a mans ſelfe, is to know that he hath no power in himſelfe to doe any ſpirituall duty, therefore wee muſt looke onely to the voyce of Chriſt, and know, that hee

hee that calls us from the wayes of darkneſſe, and from our ſelves, muſt alſo bring us to Chriſt; therefore expect power from Chriſt to plucke thee out of thy ſelfe, and to make thee beleeve, for the ſame hand doth worke both.

I would not have a poore creature thinke thus with himſelfe, If this meanes and theſe Ordinances will doe mee no good, and will not worke upon my heart, I ſhall never have it; but ſpeak thus unto God, and ſay, In truth Lord I expect no power from my ſelfe, nor from the meanes, but my reſolution is, to looke up to him that hath hid his face from

from *Iacob*, I will not looke inward here for power, to receive it from within my selfe, nor to the Minister, nor to the meanes, but I will waite upon thee Lord, and looke up to thy power to worke by the meanes. *Who is amongst you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voyce of his servants, that walketh in darknesse, & hath no light of comfort, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himselfe upon his God.* When all other things in the world faile, let the soule then looke up to the Lord, and looke out from it selfe; this is the fittest time of all to meete with God; I would have a Christian chuse this time above all

Esay. 50. 10.

all times to meete his Saviour in, and this is the onely time to disappoint Sathan; for, as I said before, it is the last refuge that the devill hath, and if hee misse this oportunity, hee is for ever conquered. Thus the sinner partly seeing the beauty of grace, will not, and partly seeing the baseneſſe of his owne heart, dares not come to Christ.

obiect. Then in the next place it is want of sense and feeling, which he would have and cannot finde; therefore the distressed soule saith, Alas, I never knew what it was to have the assurance of Gods love, I never received any evi-

dence

dence of Gods favour, and ſhall I thinke that I have faith? they that beleeve have their hearts filled with joy unſpeakable and glorious, the Word reveales this, but I am a ſtranger to that joy, how can I then thinke that I have any worke of faith wrought in me.

Anſw. I anſwer, this doth not hinder either that thou haſt not faith, or that thou maiſt not come to God by beleeving, therefore remember theſe three particulars.

1 Firſt, thou muſt not thinke to have *joy* and refreſhing before thou go to the promiſe, but thou muſt looke for it, when thou doeſt

doeſt chew and feed upon the promiſe: thou wouldeſt have the Lord to give thee all the bargaine before thou make the match: This *joy* is a fruit that proceeds frõ *faith* after much wreſtling; it doth not follow from faith at the firſt; firſt beleeve, and then joy; the heart is never filled with joy before beleeving; but afterwards when thou haſt had the ſweet dew of the comfort of the promiſe many a day, then looke for this joy.

2 Secondly, know that theſe joyes, and this ſenſe and feeling may be abſent from faith: a man may have a good faith, and yet want the relliſh and ſweetneſſe

neſſe which he longs after. A man may want his deſirings, and yet want neither life nor heate: A tree may want leaves and fruit, and yet want neither ſappe nor moyſture: A mans faith may be ſomewhat ſtrong, when his feeling is nothing at all: *David* was juſtified and ſanctified, and yet wanted this joy; and ſo *Iob* reſted upon GOD when hee had but little feeling, as when hee ſaith, *Thou makeſt mee a Butt to ſhoot at; yet I will truſt in thee though thou kill mee.* Iob 3.15. Therefore build not your comfort upon ſenſe and feeling, but goe to the promiſe.

Thirdly, the Saints of God 3

God many times are deprived of comfort, not because God with-holds it, but because they put it from themselves, and will not have it, though he offer it, as *David*, *My soule refused comfort*, like a sullen childe that wil not eate his Milke, because hee hath it not in the golden dish; so because God doth not for you what you would, you will have nothing at all. These are the maine hinderances: I might adde many more, for carnall reason is very fruitfull this way, and wee through our owne folly and the devils subtilty, are apt to abuse things, and make them hinderances in our way to eter-

Psal. 77.

eternall happineſſe. I come now to the cures of all our impediments, for if we had the wiſedome and care we ſhould have, wee might breake through them all and come to Chriſt. The means are eſpecially foure, whereby wee may be inwardly fortified againſt them, and at laſt be able to overcome them.

Helps to come to Chriſt.

The firſt cure and helpe is this, We muſt not looke too long, nor pore too much or unwarrantably upon our owne corruptions, ſo farre as to be feared or diſheartened from comming to the riches of Gods grace; for this is an everlaſting truth, that whatſoever ſight of ſin unfits a mā for

for mercy, when hee may take it, and it is offered to him, that ſight of ſin is ever ſinfull, though it have never ſo faire a pretence of ſorrow and deepe humiliation: as we think many times, Had I a ſoule ſo throughly humbled and bruiſed, and ſo forth. The devill oft keepes us in ſin, by poring upon our ſinnes, when we thinke hereby to be carried from our ſinnes; that courſe thus is a ſinfull courſe. Tell not me of ſorrow, and repentance, and humiliation, all that ſorrow and humiliation is nought that keepes a man from receiving mercie, when it is offered; ſee this in *Abraham*, hee had this pro-

True godly ſorrow what it is.

promiſe, that hee ſhould have a ſonne in his old age; *Hee being not weake in faith regarded not his old age or deadneſſe, nor the barrenneſſe of* Sarahs *wombe, but beleeved in him who had promiſed it*, and there hee reſts and ſtayes; hee ſaw his body was dead, yet there was a living promiſe; and what though *Sarahs* wombe was barren, yet the promiſe was fruitfull; he knew his owne deadneſſe and her barrenneſſe, but hee conſidered them not: ſo wee muſt ſee our ſinnes, and conſider our many weakneſſes, but never ſo ſettle our ſelves with, or conſider of them ſo, as to be hindered from comming to God for Rom. 4. 19

for mercy, which he freely offers us, and wee stand in neede of, for while the soule of a man is daily plodding upon his owne misery, and distempers, these two things follow.

1 First, wee stop the streame of Gods promise, and let downe the sluce against it, so that the promise cannot come into our soules.

2 And secondly, wee set open the streame & floud-gate of corruption, and make it to runne most violently in upon us, and in the end to overwhelme us, and the inconvenience arising hereby, will slay the best Christian in the world; for what can a man get

get out of his corruption? hee can have no more thereof than is there to be had; it is vaine to looke for comfort where it is not to be had, it may dishearten us, but never encourage us. See the humility and wisedome of the woman of *Canaan*, shee followes Christ, but he listens not to her, but gives her the repulse, and calls her *dogge*, and saith, you *Gentiles* are *dogges*; and the Gospell of Grace and salvation is the *Childrens bread*. Now if she had only considered the words of Christ, and onely looked into her owne baseness, shee had never come to receive mercy and comfort,

Math. 15. 27.

but she saith, Truth Lord, I am a *dogge*, yet the *dogges eate of the crummes that fall from their Masters table.* There are two things here which doe expresse the frame of a gracious heart that is truely wise to attend to its owne baseneſſe, her *humility* and *wisedome*; as if shee had said, Thou saist I am a *Gentile*, and a *Dog*, I confesse it, yet though I am a Dog, I will not goe out of the doores but lye under the table for mercy; so wee must and ought, when our corruptions come in upon us, and we see our selves damned creatures, let us then say, In truth, Lord, I am as bad as thy word can speak, yet let

let us not flie away from mercy, but lie at the feete of our Saviour.

It is fit, and wee ought to see our sinnes, but stay not too long here; see thy sinnes thou must, but not be setled thereon, so as to be kept from Christ; that sight of sinne which doth not drive a man to Christ for mercy, is ever sinfull. Labour therefore to see thy sinnes, thus:

How to see sinne aright.

First, see thy sinnes till thou see them odious and loathsome.

Secondly, till thou see an utter insufficiencie in thy selfe to satisfie for them.

Thirdly, till thou hast seene an absolute necessity

of Christ to succour thee; and then away speedily to the throne of Grace, and dwell no longer on thy sinnes, for *there* is pardon enough to remove the guilt that sin hath brought upon thy soule, *there* is power enough to make thee master thy corruptions. Indeed every soule should say thus, It is true Lord, my sinnes are many and great, for I have departed from thee the fountaine of blisse. But shall I goe on yet further from thee, and persist in evill? God forbid. All this while I speake to broken hearted Christians. You prophane ones, you have your portion already, and shal have more

more afterwards, therefore a while ſtand you by, and let the Children come to their ſhare.

Eſay. 66.2. Opened.

The Lord lookes to him that is of an humble and contrite heart, and that trembles before him. A poore creature cannot but obſerve every word, and tremble at every truth. Here is ſalvation (indeed ſaith hee) but it is not mine, here is mercy, but I have no part in it; and ſo hee ſhakes at the apprehenſion, concluding certainly I ſhall never enjoy it. Now marke what the text ſaith, *The Lord lookes at ſuch a trembling ſoule*, that is, he caſts ſweet intimations of his goodneſſe and kindneſſe

[Hooker, T.]

upon him, and ſaith, Thou poore trembling ſinner, to thee be it ſpoken, I have an eye towards thee in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Eſay. 40.2. *Comfort yee, comfort yee my people* (ſaith the Lord) *ſpeake comfortably to Ieruſalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accompliſhed, and her iniquity is pardoned, tell Ieruſalem ſhe is accepted, tell her what my minde is.* So the Lord ſaith to his Miniſters, Speake to the heart of ſuch an humbled penitent ſinner, tell him from MEE, tell him from Heaven, tell him from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, tell him from under the hand of the *Spirit* his perſon is accepted, and his ſinnes are done

done away, and he shall be looked upon in mercy.

Ephraim is the picture of a soule truly humbled, in whom wee may see the behaviour of a true penitent towards God, and Gods dealing towards him. The Text saith, *Surely I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himselfe* (there's the heart broken & thirsting) *thou hast chastised mee, and I was chastised, turne thou to mee, and I shall be turned: thou art the Lord my GOD, Surely after that I was turned I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth.* As if the sinner

Jerem 31. 18,19,20.

should say, I am the wretch that have seene all the meanes of grace in abundant measure, and yet never profited under the same. The Lord hath corrected me, but I would not be tamed; He hath instructed me, but I would not learne. Lord turne mee, Thou art my God; I have nothing in my selfe; Nay, now I see the evills which before I never perceived; And I observe the baseneſſe of my course now which before I never considered; And I am ashamed of my abuse of grace revealed, I am even confounded in the sense of those abominations which my soule hath harboured.

This

This is the mourning of a poore ſinner; Now marke Gods anſwer: *Ephraim is my ſonne, hee is a pleaſant childe, for ſince I ſpake againſt him, I doe earneſtly remember him ſtill, therefore my bowells are troubled for him, I will ſure have mercy upon him.* As who ſhould ſay, I obſerved all thoſe ſecret ſighes, I conſidered all thoſe teares, I heard all thoſe prayers, and tooke notice of all thoſe complaints, and my bowells earne towards this poore ſinner, that ſeekes to me for mercy. And the truth is, I will embrace him with my loving kindneſſe.

Now the ſecond means of cure is this, take heed 2. Helpe.

of judging thy estate by carnall reason without the rule, as thus it is the fashion of poore distressed spirits, to passe fearefull sentence upon themselves upon groundlesse arguments, & to say, I never found it, I feele no such thing, and I feare it is not so. Thus we heare those carnall pleas which Sathan helps us to invent, and we judge our selves by them: Now, I say, take heed of this, and make conscience of this same, as of any other sinne of swearing, stealing, whoring, or murther, for this is as truely a sinne as those, though not so great; nay, it is a farre greater sin than you imagine. Consider this

The danger of judging ourselves rashly.

this you humble-hearted Christians, for to you I speake; for when upon these grounds thou concludest thy case and estate is naught: see against how many Commandements thou sinnest. First, thou dishonourest God and the worke of his grace; in denying that which GOD hath done for thee, & speakest *unreverently* against God; thou art a *murderer*, and woundest thy owne soule; thou robbest thy selfe of comfort, and art a *thiefe*; and thou *beares false witnesse* against thine owne heart, yea against Christ, and his Spirit, and the worke of grace wrought in thee, and joynest with the

the devill against the Lord Christ.

But thou wilt say, I speake as I thinke. That hinders not, but that thou beareſt falſe witneſſe: as we ſee, if a man affirme ſuch a one is a drunkard, and knowes it not, this man beares falſe witneſſe, becauſe though the man bee a drunkard, yet hee knowes it not: ſo thou ſayeſt thou haſt nothing, when as thou doſt onely feare it, and ſuſpect it, and the like: I ſpeake this the rather, becauſe of the ſinfull diſtemper that creepes in upon the hearts of many broken-hearted Chriſtians, that out of a ſelfe-willd rode of carnall rea-

ſon,

ſon, and a vile haunt that they have got, their hearts are perſwaded that they doe well to do ſo, and they are never well except they do thus.

But ſuch as theſe (mark it) when reaſon is plaine, and the Scriptures are evidently againſt them, they doe not ſo much attend what the Miniſter ſaith, but they ſtand and invent how they may anſwere the Miniſter, and ſo put away their owne comforts. Let the feare of God fall upon every ſoule that heares this, and know that howſoever you have taken leave to your ſelves, and have taken up pleas againſt the truth, yet now goe your

your wayes, and mourne for it, and wonder that the Lord hath not taken away all the comfort of his grace, and all the motions of his Spirit from you. The Prophet *David* prayes the Lord to *turne away his eyes from beholding vanitie*: now if God must doe that, then much more must hee turn away our hearts from attending to vanities: I must attend to God, and the voice of his Spirit, but to listen to those carnall pleas which I have no warrant to doe, I sinne deepely, and hurt my own soule dangerously thereby. No man would deale with a cheator; carnall reason is a cheator, therefore

Psal. 119. 37.

fore let us not attend ther-
to, unleſſe wee reſolve to
bee cozened; and if the
danger of the ſinne cannot
make us doe this, then let
the ſorow that will come
by it conſtraine us: *Behold* Iſai, 50.11
all you that kindle a fire⌣,
and that compaſſe your ſelves
about with the⌣ *ſparkles*
that ye⌣ *have kindled, this*
ſhall you have at my hand,
ye ſhall lie downe in ſorrow.
I will ſhew what is meant
by *ſparkles*, and what by
fire; in the old Law you
know there was heavenly
fire continually in the San-
ctuary, that ſhadowed out
to us the will and wiſdom
of God in his word: but
there was alſo ſtrange fire,
that is, there were divers
ſpar-

sparkles of their *owne* imaginations, and conceits; every poore creature caries his tinder-boxe about him, and hee is ever kindling of it; which the Lord doth not allow of: In that text are two things: first, that the heart of man will naturally invent carnall reasons and pleas against it selfe, and be setled upon them: secondly, the issue that follows thereupon, This shall yee have of mine hand, you shall lie downe in your owne sorrow. When the Scriptures are cleare, and reasons are evident, and yet you will have your owne devices, thus much I tell you, you shall lie downe in sorrow

at last, and you may thank your selves for it; away with your tinder-boxes therfore, abase your selves before the throne of grace and bee at length wise to salvation.

Ho every one that thirsteth (saith God by his Prophet) *come and buy without money, take of the well of the water of life, and live for ever freely.* Many a poore Minister would fain leave his commodity behinde him, and saith, You must have it, and you shall have it; it is your portion, and belongs of right unto you; we are even faine to force Gods favours upon the soule. We beseech you to beleeve, and wee intreat you

you for the Lord JESUS ſake to receive mercy and humble your hearts.

But will any man take theſe favours?

No beloved, many ſweet promiſes, and many admirable precious things of grace and ſalvation are revealed, but men neither paſſe nor care to receive benefit by them. Some carnal plea or other evades all. This argues plainely your ſmall eſtimation of CHRIST. A poore hungry ſinner that is apprehenſive of his owne weakneſſe and feebleneſſe, longs till the *feaſt day* commeth, that hee may partake of theſe delicates. Oh how carefully will he liſten, and how

how diligently will he attend what the Minister saith; and if the Word comes home to his conscience inlightning his heart, and reproving him of his secret corruption, he cries out. I am in great trouble, good Lord comfort me: I am full of doubts, good Lord resolve me: I am ignorant in spirituall things, good Lord teach me. I have a proud, stout, stubborn heart, good Lord humble me. Take this for a generall rule, A good heart is alwayes at best ease, when the Word works most. But a wicked graceless person is then best, when the Word works least upon him. There-

Therefore when he thinks the Minister will come close to his soule, hee will not bee at home that day, he will be sure to be out of Towne, hee knowes the Word would awaken him, and affright him, and hee cannot beare the blow, therefore he keepes away, and shunnes the hearing of Gods word, which would worke upon him.

3. *Helpe.* But thirdly, let us bee marvellously wary and watchfull that wee enter not into the lists of dispute with Sathan, upon those points which are beyond the reach of man; as thus to say, I am not elected, therefore GOD will not doe me good, it is vaine

vaine for mee to uſe the meanes; my time of mercy is gone, oh the day of grace that I have ſeene, the Lord knocked ſweetly, and was pleaſed to reveale my ſinnes at ſuch a time: but then hard-hearted wretch that I was, I ſhut the doore of my heart againſt the Lord JESUS CHRIST, and now it is gone and paſt, now there is no hope for ever of receiving mercy againe: If the deviil get thee here, all thy comfort is gone, for upon this ground a man ſhall never receive reſt to his heart while the world ſtands; for if no man can ever know the thing, how ſhall I bee able to give, or any

any man to take comfort? Looke as it is with a poore travelling man that lighteth among theeves, who come and promiſe to cary him a neerer way, and at laſt they bring him into a wood where no paſſengers come, and there they doe what they will with him: ſo it is with a poore ſoule, when the devill gets him into theſe ſecret diſputes of Gods eternall counſell, there are no paſſengers come this way, therefore thou art void of ſuccour, and Satan may exerciſe his pleaſure in terrifying thy poore ſoule. Therefore for your direction in this caſe, obſerve three rules.

1 Firſt, let the ſoule in this caſe

caſe ſtay it ſelfe upon the al-mightineſſe of the power of God, *I am God all-ſufficient:* if thou art perſwaded of the all-ſufficiency of GOD, this will helpe thee: God can doe more thā thou canſt think. Hee is able, and will doe thee good, though thou know it not; and therefore obſerve thus much, the ſoule never doubts of Gods will, but it doubts of his power alſo in ſome meaſure. Gen. 17. 1.

Secondly, check thine owne heart for medling with Gods ſecrets, and prying into his hidden counſels; let no man goe beyond his bounds: it appertaines not to thee to dive 2

Deut.29. 29. 1.Cor.1. 2.16.

dive into this mystery. *Secret things belong to God, but revealed things belong to us:* and *Who hath knowne the mind of God?* saith *Paul.* Mark this, you that will be going up into the skies to know what Gods secret mind is, keepe your stations wisely, for the Devill and all the Devills in hell never knew the minde of the Lord. When *Ionas* cried against Niniveh, saying, Within forty daies all you drunkards, and adulterers shall be destroyed: Mark there how the King stayes himself, saying, Who can tell if the Lord will repent and stay his fierce wrath that we perish not. When the Devill tells thee thus,

Ionas 4.19

and

and saith, God hath appointed a way to salvation, and you have had the meanes, and did not profit by them, therefore GOD will never shew you mercie, nor give you grace: how can the Devill tell that? nay all the Devills in hell cannot tell: let mee walke in that course which God hath appointed and commanded, and doe that which I ought, and let me say, who knows but GOD may breake the heart of a proud rebellious sinner, none but God knows it.

Thirdly, Measure not the riches of Gods love, and the sweetnesse of his grace according to your owne conceits, and do not

thinke that because you cannot conceive it, therefore God will not doe it:

Esay.55.7, 8,9. *Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*, saith the Prophet: that is, All you wicked ones, and you that have lived leudly, returne from your wicked wayes, and from your vaine imaginations, for he will abundantly pardon.

Object. But will the Lord pardon all my sinnes, saith the soule, I cannot think it, If I were a God, I should never passe by such intolerable things.

Answ. And because you cannot, you think God cannot: Yes, saith the Lord, I can abundantly pardon, for

for my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor my waies as your waies. A poore creature thinks his sinnes are unpardonable, and he shall never get assurance of Gods love. You are *men*, saith the Lord, and have finite thoughts, but I am *God*, and have mercy infinitely, when you think I have no mercy.

Obiect. But there were never any such received to mercy, saith the soule, and therefore why should I be the man?

Answ. When CHRIST had wrought many strange miracles, the people said, there were never any such things done in Israel; and therefore it is plaine, God

can doe things that never were done the like: *Hee doth great things past finding out, and wondrous without number*, saith *Iob*: therefore judge not Gods power and love by what thou canst conceive. Iob 9.10.

The best Christians are most suspitious of themselves, and none fuller of doubts and feares, then those that have least cause to feare their estates are bad. Sathan makes it his chiefe worke to grieve and terrifie these. And their owne distrustfull hearts are alwayes raising false surmises, and putting mercie from them, as if they were hired by the devill, to take his part in pleading against

againſt themſelves. Therefore it is worth our obſerving what *David* ſaith, *Pſal.42. The Lord ſhall command his loving kindneſſe in the morning.* It is a phraſe taken from *Princes* & great Cōmanders, whoſe words are a law. So God wil ſend forth his loving kindneſſe to a truly humbled Chriſtian with a *command.* As if hee ſhould ſay, Goe *love* and *everlaſting mercy*, take thy Commiſſion, and I charge thee go to that poor broken-hearted ſinner, goe to that poore hungry, and thirſty ſoule: goe and proſper & prevaile, and ſettle my love upon his heart, whether hee will or no. Thus the Lord charges Pſal.42.18.

his loving kindnesse to doe good to poore sinners, and by his owne Almightinesse stayeth the soule, when it is ready to sinke under the burthen of its transgressions.

Object. What, shall I have mercie, No, No, (saith the doubting heart?) Will the Lord Jesus accept me? No surely. Could I pray so, and had I these parts, and could I performe duties after this and this manner, then there were some hope, but alas there is no mercy for me.

Answ. Let mee tell thee who ever thou art, God invites thee in particular, and all the sweetnesse in Christ, and his precious promises, apper-

appertaine to thy ſoule, and thou haſt as great an intereſt in them, as any ſervant of God in the world whatſoever.

No, No, ſaith the trembling ſoule, I cannot beleeve it; ſuch a wretch as I goe to heaven, It cannot bee; heaven ſhall rather fall then I come there. Thus the diſcouraged ſinner knocks off mercy, and ſhuts the doore againſt himſelfe. *Object.*

Now when all carnall reaſonings, and high imaginations, (as *Paul* calls them) have raiſed up ſtrong holds againſt mercie and comfort; when the word cannot for the preſent ſettle peace in the

soule, God is faine at last to *command* loving kindnesse, and send him with a Commission from heaven, saying, I charge you, break open the doore of the heart of such a sinner, rend that vayle of ignorance that is before his eyes, silence all his doubts and feares; And I charge you goe home to that soule, and cheere it, refresh it with the sense of my favour, and fill it with the assurance of my love.

Rom. 5. 8. *Whilest wee were enemies*, saith the Apostle, *Christ died for us*. The Lord sends from heaven to a poore miserable creature, Commend my love, commend my mercy to such a distressed

ſed ſoule, and tell him though hee hath beene an enemie to mee, yet I am a friend to him. Tell him though hee hath beene a Traytour to mee, I have beene a good King to him. Hee hath beene a rebell to mee, but tell him I have beene a loving GOD to him. Tell him his ſinnes are pardoned, his perſon accepted, and his ſoule ſhal be ſaved. Tell him his ſighes and groanes are heard, and his prayers obſerved in heaven; let him know that the Lord Jeſus died for ſinners when they were ſinners. Make this good to his ſoule I charge you before you come back.

Therefore the fourth

Helpe.

cure is this, and it is ſpecially to be obſerved above all in thy proceeding with thy ſelfe in judgement; that is, Paſſe no ſentence againſt thy ſoule, but according to the evidence of the Word: if thou art to be approved, let the word of GOD approve thee, and let his word examine thee, if thou art to be examined; if the Word ſpeake for thee, it is no matter though all men and Angels ſpeak againſt thee; and if the word condemne thee, it is no matter who ſpeakes for thee: what though ſome wrangling rayler ſtep in, and will be determining the cauſes before the Judge comes; yet

a wise man will stay till the Judge comes, and wait his leasure. Deale thou so with thine owne soule, put not the case to be tryed by a company of peevish carnal reasons, but stay till the word come, and judge thy selfe by that, and hold to that for ever. *The light is that which manifesteth all things*; the meaning is this, the light of the word, and the evidences of Gods truth manifested to the soules of Gods people; all sense and feeling of carnall reasoning, are like fogges and mists which make a man that he cannot see the way; but bring him to the light, and then his state and condition will bee manifested Eph.5.13.

Math.11. 29.

fested what it is. *Learne of me* (saith our Saviour) *and you shall finde rest to your soules*: And the Psalmist saith, *I will enquire what the Lord will say*: so say thou, I will not hearken what carnall reason will say. The want of this is the cause why we have so many distractions and disquietments, & are still in doubtings, because hee that teacheth us is a deluder.

For the poore soule saith, What, shall I have an interest in Christ, shall I have title to the promises? nay, this belongs to those that are broken-hearted: indeed if I had such power against corruption, such heavenly mindednes, and

and this and that, there were ſome hopes, but I am ſo full of weakneſſe, and many times led captive by my rebellious heart; that it is too apparent I never had ſaving grace, nay, I feare I never ſhall have it truly wrought in my ſoule.

But who told you ſo, and where learned you this Religion? I am ſure you never learned it of Chriſt. Who, or what word tells you, If I have ſuch corruptions, I ſhall never have grace? not the word of Chriſt, I am ſure: wherefore I charge you hold to the truth of the word; Learne of *me*, ſaith *Chriſt*, and put not your cauſe to bee decided by car-

carnall reason, nor hearken what it telleth you; for if you take that course, you shall never come to Christ whilst the world standeth: Learne of the Lord Christ, for his word is faithfull, and his promise sure, and there you shall finde rest as strong as Mount Sion; it is that word whereby thou shalt be judged at the great day, when sense and feeling shall be cast out for wranglers, and never come into Court. Thus much of the foure cures: I will now propound foure rules how a man may order himselfe aright in this course, so that he may repaire to the word at all times, as he ought to doe, and

and gaine evidence there for establishing his heart in peace and tranquillity.

Rules to direct a Christian how to use the Word of God for the evidence of his assurance.

Rule. 1. First, to use the word of God aright: as thou must in all conditions that concerne thy soule repaire to the Word, so thou must consider thine owne uprightnesse, and what work of grace is in thy soule, that wil answer the word, and testifie that the worke of grace is true: be sure to take thy soule at the best; doe not alwayes consider what is the worst part in thee,

thee, nor thy failings that may accuſe thee onely, but if there bee any uprightneſſe that may ſpeake for thee, heare that alſo; It is injuſtice for any Court to heare one ſide and not another: the Lord doth not lie at catch with his children, but he takes them at the beſt: as *Rom.*4.22. it is ſaid that *Abraham beleeved the promiſe, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſſe:* yet in the 12.of *Gen.* we ſee he had ſome doubtings, but God tooke him at the beſt, and ſo records this of his faith. So we ſee that *Sarah* is ſpoken of as a gracious woman, and a paterne for women in calling her huſband *Lord*, which

1.Pet.3.6.
Gen.18.12

which was a ſigne of an humble heart; but yet we reade that ſhe derided the meſſage of the Lord by the Angel; yet notwithſtanding the Lord buries that, and onely mentions the other in the commendations of her. Now as the Lord deales with his ſervants, ſo muſt wee deale with our ſelves, whatſoever is found ſincere and upright, obſerve that as well as the other, nay rather before the other. If a man ſhould have his cauſe handled in any Court after this faſhion, and they ſhould onely obſerve the failings in his cauſe, the beſt cauſe may happily go againſt a man, therefore the

the Court will heare all read; as if any Bond or Bill come in, or any matter of agreement, they will heare all: If a man have an Indenture, and the Lawyer onely opens and reads the failings in it, and that which seems to make against the party, if the Judge onely heare that, it must needs goe against him, and therefore the man saith, Good my Lord heare all: and when they finde it written that such a debt is paid, and the party satisfied, then the cause goes well; whereas if they had heard onely the first part, and not the second, hee had lost all. So, many bring in great inditements against

againſt themſelves, and ſay, Oh what pride and ſtubbornneſſe is in my heart, oh how weake am I, and dull, and dead, and backward to holy duties? How careleſſe of injoying communion with GOD? How negligent in ſifting and trying my own heart, in watching over my ſenſes, and mourning in ſecret for my dayly failings? It is true; but art thou not troubled with theſe, and is it not the greateſt griefe of thy ſoule that lies upon thee? yea, ſaith the poore ſoule, I confeſſe my heart is weary of theſe, and I could be content to bee any thing, that I could not bee thus: now take thy ſoule

ſoule on this ſide, and heare the beſt part: as it is with a mans hand and the ſtaffe, I compare the promiſe to a ſtaffe, you know the backe of a mans hand cannot take hold of the ſtaffe, but let him turn the palme of his hand to the ſtaffe, and then he can take it: ſo turne thou the right ſide of thy ſoule to the promiſe, and then thou maiſt take it; but we turne the back-ſide of our hearts to the promiſe, when the ſoule ſaith, Oh my ſtubbornneſſe is great, and mine inabilities and corruptions are many; this is the wrong ſide of thine heart, and this will ever hinder thee from taking hold

hold of the promiſe; but thy ſoule hates theſe, and is weary of them; this is the right ſide of the heart, turne that to the promiſe.

Secondly, Labour to have thy conſcience ſetled and eſtabliſhed in that truth which now out of the Word thou haſt gotten, to beare witneſſe of the work of grace in thee; for if there bee any want of the aſſurance of Gods love, and if the evidence of the work of grace come not powerfully in upon thy heart, but there is ſome guilt of ſinne ſtill remaining, then conſcience will breed new broiles, and continually nip and diſquiet

Rule. 2.

quiet the heart; therefore as wee muſt have our judgement informed by the Word that there is ſome good in us, ſo wee muſt get conſcience perſwaded of it, that conſcience may ſpeake for us: as the debtor, if he be indebted to many creditors, he muſt agree with all; for if hee agree with all ſave one, that *one* may impriſon him as well as all the reſt: So it is with the poore diſtreſſed ſoule that lies at the mercy of the Lord, and is ſo deepe in arerages that hee cannot helpe himſelfe, he muſt labour to ſtill conſcience, that it doe not accuſe him, but be on his ſide.

The

The want of this is the cauſe why new ſuits and new bills are dayly put up againſt us, onely becauſe conſcience is not pacified; take a poore ſinner that hath all his doubts and objections anſwered, come to him, and ſay, Are all theſe all your doubts and objections? yes: and are they all anſwered? yes: and have you now any thing to ſay againſt that which hath beene made knowne unto you? no not now: Say to him againe, Did your conſcience ſay to you, it is a ſinne to ſay you have no grace? Now here hee demurres and ſtayes, and ſaith, No I dare not ſay ſo, but I rather ſay the contrary.

[Hooker, T.]

contrary. Marke this, all the books are croſt, and all objections anſwered, and yet conſcience puts in a new plea, becauſe it was not ſatisfied.

Now come to him a-gaine, and ſay, You are ſometimes captived by ſinne, but you are willing to bee at Gods diſpoſing, and that he ſhould plucke away al thoſe corruptions, are you not?

Oh ſaith the poore ſinner, I muſt needs yeeld to that; then I affirme to thy ſoule this is a work of true grace: therefore let conſcience bee fully ſatisfied, and cancell all ſelfe-accuſations; this will cleare the heart, and caſt out all ca-

vills

vills that come in againſt us: *For if our conſciences condemne us not, then wee have boldneſſe towards God:* we muſt mark conſcience, and bee convinced, that it is a ſinne to ſay, God hath not wrought this worke of grace in our hearts: for though ſenſe and feeling bee ſometimes gone, yet conſcience remembers the day and yeare when hee had a cleare evidence of Gods love, and ſaith, Lord thou knoweſt it, and thou didſt ſay out of thy Word at ſuch a time that my heart was upright and ſincere in thy ſight.

It ſhould bee with a poore ſinner, as it is with a wiſe man when he would

[Hooker, T.]

make his lands ſure unto him and his poſterity by evidences and writings, he is not content onely to have his evidences in his owne keeping, but will have them inrolled in Chancery, ſuch a yeare, and ſuch a day, that if hee ſhould loſe his deeds, hee may be ſure to finde them againe there: ſo it ſhould be with a diſtreſſed ſoule, wee ſhould not onely bee content to have all our objections anſwered, but get them recorded in the Court of *Conſcience*, that when ſenſe and feeling is loſt, yet wee may readily goe to the Court of *Conſcience*, and there finde the day and yeare when Gods love

love was made ſure to us.

Thirdly, we ſhould ſtrive mightily to have our heats over-powred with the evidence which reaſon and conſcience makes good to us, that ſo we may quietly receive it, and calmly welcome it, and yeeld and ſubject our hearts to the truth. But here wee all ſticke, for there are three things in the ſoule of a man which maintain theſe quarrels and oppoſitions againſt the evidence of the Word: 1. Reaſon objects: 2. Conſcience accuſeth: 3. The Will of man will not ſubmit: and wee finde it in experience that when a man hath ſtilled conſcience, and anſwe-

Rule. 3.

[Hooker, T.]

red all reasons, yet the stubbornnesse of the heart maintaines a gaine-saying against the truth, and keepes the olde quarrell that hath been answered long agoe, and that a man would think had been buried long since. It is in this case with a poore sinner, as it is with a man that hath a contentious adversary; happily the cause that they two have in hand hath beene tried in all the Courts of England, and at last comes to Chancery, and there it is concluded against him, so that all things are setled and ended, as a man would think, and an honest man would sit downe and bee quiet:

quiet: but the other being a quarrelsome fellow will not yeeld yet, but to the old law he will againe, and hee will sell all he hath but he will have his will; till at the last the Judge comes to take notice of this man, and casts out the cause, and puts him in prison, and saith, These things were all answered, and the cause ended long agoe:

Just so for all the world is it with the heart of a gracious man that is humbled in some measure, and could bee content to yeeld to the credit of Gods word, and to the witnesse of his conscience, and saith My condition is better than I thought it was,

[Hooker, T.]

but there is an old proud ſelfe-willed heart that will not bee quiet, but ſtill is quarrelſome, and maintaines the old quarrell; Though reaſons are all confuted, and conſcience beares witneſſe againſt him, and every Miniſter caſts out the cauſe; yet obſerve it, a poore diſtreſſed ſinner will keepe the old objections, and though they were anſwered the night before, yet hee will have them freſh the next morning, and the next moneth, even when a man would think he ſhould not dare to come in Court; and the miſchiefe lies even here, in a proud ſelfe-willed heart that will not yeeld.

yeeld. Therefore labour to get thy heart ſo farre over-powerd with the authority of the truth, whatſoever it is that God reveales to thee for thy good, and doe not reject the evidence which GOD makes known and paſſeth upon thy ſoule for thy everlaſting well-fare, doe not (I ſay) reject it: and becauſe thou haſt not that comfort that thou wouldeſt, therefore thou wilt have none at all: it is not properly becauſe thou canſt not, but becauſe thou wilt not receive the promiſe, that ſo wracks and torments thy ſpirit: this is it which breeds the quarrell: and hence it is

that when reason is satisfied, and conscience convinced, ask the soule this question, and say, Are you perswaded that the Lord hath done you good, and will shew everlasting mercy to your soule? no (saith he) all the world shall not perswade mee of that; Ministers are mercifull, and Christians are charitable, and are loth to discourage me, as I should doe to them, but did they know me indeed they would never think thus of me, certainely I shall never finde it so: What I grace? all the world shall never perswade mee to it. Marke what I say, this is meerely thy pride and selfe-wil-

nesse

neſſe that will not receive that good which God is willing to give thee; this helliſh and devilliſh pride of thine will coſt thee deere one day.

But will ſome ſay, How is it pride? wee are ever complaining and condemning our ſelves, this cannot be pride. *Object.*

Yes I ſay it is abominable pride, againſt the Majeſty of heaven; and that, I will ſhew theſe two wayes: First for a man to follow his owne conceits and ſelfe-wilneſſe againſt the truth, and the force of reaſon, and the witneſſe of the ſervants of GOD, and his owne conſcience, is not this pride? *Anſw.*

Secondly, thy pride appeares in this, namely, becauſe thou haſt not what thou wouldeſt, and in that manner and meaſure thou deſireſt, and haſt not that ſweetneſſe of grace and conqueſt over corruption that thou wouldſt have, therefore thou flingeſt away all Gods kindneſſe; this is infinite pride: That meaſure of mercy which God hath already ſhewed thy ſoule is incomprehenſible, and yet becauſe you cannot have what you would, you will have nothing at all. As a man that hath the Law on his ſide, and his eſtate ſetled on him, yet becauſe his evidences are not written in great

great huge letters, and in large paper, hee throwes them all away: so you have no grace, because you have not so much as you would have; you have no humility, because you have not so much humility: Oh pride, pride, in the highest degree.

Labour therefore to bring thy heart to this blessed subjection to the truth of God, and make it thy duty as well to receive comfort when God offers it upon good grounds, as to doe a duty commanded, and know that it is a sinne to reject mercy when God offers it, as to kill a man which God hath forbidden;

den; and therefore you Saints of God that have beene peſtered thus, and have beene enemies to your ſelves, when your hearts begin to ſlide away thus, take your hearts and reaſon thus with your ſoules, and ſay, Good Lord, this is the proud ſtubborne diſtemper of this vile heart of mine; what would I have? is not Gods word cleare, and my conſcience ſatisfied? doe not the Miniſters of God affirme my ſtate to be good? and ſhall I thus diſhonour God?

Obiect. But what ſaith the poor ſoule againe, Muſt I eate mine owne words, and ſay I have grace, when before

I

I ſaid I had none?

Anſw. Yes, and be thankfull to God that thou maiſt ſay ſo too; it is better for you to croſſe your owne humours, than croſſe Gods Spirit: take notice of it, and feare for ever, leſt that proud and ſtubborne ſoule of thine, which now refuſeth conſolation when God offers it, be forced to eat thy fleſh, and come upon thy knees, and never get comfort to thy dying day; and though God ſave thee in the end, yet thou ſhalt be as it were in hell upon earth.

One would have thought it had beene humility in *Peter* to refuſe to let *Chriſt waſh his feet*, but it was nothing

thing but pride, and therefore Christ takes him up for it sharply, (which is indeed the only way to cure this distemper) *If I wash thee not thou hast no part in me:* if you will needs have your owne humours, and will not be perswaded, you may get you downe to hell with them: *Peter* paused with himselfe a while, but at last when his stomack came downe, then, *Lord, not only my feet, but my hands & heart and all.* It is humility of heart to take what God offers. Most Christians thinke they are humble-hearted, but they are so farre proud, as they give leave to this distemper: therefore labour to over-

Ioh. 13. 8, 9

master

maſter this gaine-ſaying heart of thine, with the authority of the word of God, and learne to receive mercy when God offers it, leſt he take away the comfort of his Spirit from you, and make you goe howling and roaring to your graves. Though hee bring you to heaven in the end, yet you may have a hell before you come thither.

Rule 4. The laſt Rule is this, Maintaine the good word which thy heart hath ſubmitted to, and keepe it as the beſt treaſure under heaven; and when thou haſt obtained certaine evidence that thy eſtate is good, heare nothing againſt it, but ſtick faſt to the

the same, regard nothing but out of the word of God, against that comfort and evidence of thy salvation, which thou hast been perswaded of by the word; if Sathan or carnall reason have any thing to say against thee, let them bring Scripture, and then yeeld to it, but without the word heare nothing. Looke as it is with a man that is at law for lands, if hee have his adversary on the hip, and have gotten some advantage against him, hee will keepe him there, and hold him to the point. If a man will follow every wrangling Lawyer at every impertinent out-straying, he will never have any good suc-

ſucceſſe; it is the faſhion of many Atturnies rather to breed quarrels, than to end them; and therefore hold to the maine point. Deale with Sathan as with a ſubtill adverſary that is full of wiles and fetches. It is the cunning of the enemie to lead you out, and hee will have many vagaries, but be ſure to hold to that truth which you have receeived from the evidence of the word, and the witneſſe of conſcience. When a man hath gotten ſome comfort, then the devill begins to play the Lawyer in this manner.

Doeſt thou not ſee how weake and poore thou art? how deſtitute of all ſaving grace, *Sathan.*

grace, and how contrary thou walkeſt to God?

How the ſoule being tempted may anſwer Sathans accuſations.

Sinner. It is true (ſaith the ſoul) yet it is as true that hee that confeſſeth and forſaketh his ſinne, ſhall have mercy.

Sathan. But (ſaith the devill) doeſt thou not ſee that thou art full of pride and weakneſſe, and ſecretly unwilling to come to duties?

Sinner. It is true (ſaith the ſoule) I am ſo, yet I hate and deſire to forſake this, therefore ſhall finde mercy, the word ſaith ſo.

Sathan. But (ſaith the devill) are you

you of Gods counsell, secret things belong to God?

Indeed (saith the soule) I know not what Gods secret wil is, yet this I know, that the word saith, Hee hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but invites such daily to come unto him. *Sinner.*

But (saith the devil) many cozen themselves, mercie is a great thing, and few obtaine it, and why may not you be cozened as well as others? *Sathan.*

But (saith the soule) the Lord will not cozen mee, and the Lord knowes my heart, & the word knowes what the Lord knowes. *Sinner.*

But (saith the devill) may not you be deceived *Sathan.*

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in the word; the word is true indeed, but how know you that you rightly apply it, and that the word and your heart doth sute together.

Sinner. Why (saith the soule:) I desire as earnestly to have my sinne purged, as I doe to have it pardoned. I know my heart by the word, and to the word I repaire, & the Lord knowes that I hate all sinne inwardly, and reforme it outwardly, and therefore I know I shall finde mercie: show mee a place of Scripture that saith I doe not rightly apply the word, and I will beleeve it; but I wil not beleeve thee, for thou art a deluder and

a lyar. Thus hold to the word, and the devill will be tired, and goe away: keepe you here, for if hee catch you a wandring after ſenſe and feeling, you are gone. *Thou through* thy Cõmandements *haſt made me wiſer than mine enemies,* ſaith *David, for* they *are ever with mee.* Sathan is wiſe; and the fleſh, and carnall reaſon, and the world, are wiſe, but bleſſed be our God that makes every poore ignorant ſervant of his wiſer than all theſe: but how? the word muſt bee ever with them; you muſt keepe the word with you daily, and that will make you not know onely what is amiſſe, but get ground againſt

Pſal. 119. 98.

againſt whatſoever hinders your peace.

Sathan deales in this with the ſoule, as the enemie deales in warre: when
Ioſh.8.19. *Ioſhua* defeated the men of *Ai*, hee got them out of the Citie, and then they that lay in ambuſh went and tooke it in, and burnt it with fire: ſo the devill doth: Our Caſtle or Citie is the promiſes, and the word, and ordinances of God: now if the devill can but get you out of this Caſtle, he hath you where he would; if you wil looke after every bird that flyes, and liſten after every carnall reaſon and temptation, you are gone; if hee once get you from the pro-

promiſe, hee will intangle you in his ſnare and overcome you.

Little Children, if yee abide in Gods Commandements, yee abide in God, ſaith the Apoſtle: As if he had ſaid, Children, your enemies are many, and great, and cunning, therfore keep home, keepe home, come not abroad, and then you ſhall be ſafe, whatſoever troubles ariſe. It is the faſhion of parents, if their children runne abroad and catch a knock, they tell them that they are well enough ſerved, you might have kept home when you had warning. 1 Ioh.2.28.

The iſſue of this point is this, Judge thy ſoule by the

the word, and looke upon thy ſacred part, and let that beare witneſſe for thee, and what the word of God doth evidence to thee, that maintaine, and heare nothing againſt it; this is the way to receive conſtant comfort, and goe on merrily in our Chriſtian courſe: let quarrels, troubles, and temptations come, yet keepe you within doores, and reſt your ſelves upon the riches of Gods free grace in Jeſus Chriſt, and be for ever comforted, and you may goe ſinging to Heaven, and to your graves, though you meet with never ſo many temptations and oppoſitions.

Meanes to obtaine an intereſt in the Promiſes.

Now I will ſhew you ſome meanes whereby a man may ſo improve his time, that at laſt hee may obtaine this bleſſed eſtate; which are foure; but before I do begin with them, you muſt be advertiſed of thus much, that wee may uſe the meanes, but there is no meanes under heaven *alone* will doe it, yet you muſt wait upon GOD in the uſe of the meanes, for it is not the meanes that will worke faith, but the Spirit of GOD in the uſe of the meanes; and therefore the Text ſaith,

To you it is given to beleeve, for faith is the free gift of God; it is God that mūst doe it, and yet he will not doe it without us, becauſe wee are reaſonable men and women. The Lord affords us meanes, and therefore wee are to wait upon him in the uſe of thoſe meanes; let the Lord doe what he will, and let us doe what wee ſhould: wee muſt not think when wee have the meanes then we can get faith preſently, for as *Paul* ſaith, *The ſame power that raiſed up Ieſus from the dead muſt make us able to beleeve*, or elſe all the Angels in heaven, and all the Miniſters on earth, and all the helpe that men and

Eph. 19. 20

and meanes can doe thee, will doe thee no good, the meanes are divers, as hearing and prayer, which are the Conduits whereby God communicates faith; but I let those passe, and onely fasten upon those which are needful for feeble Christians to bring them into this blessed state, and those are these.

First, we must, as much as in us lies, labour to pluck away all those props that the soule leanes upon, and all those outward succours, and whatsoever outward contentment it is, which a poore sinner doth repaire and betake himselfe to for reliefe and helpe, that when all these 1. *Meanes.*

are taken from us, we may bee forced to goe for succour there where it is to be had. It is that which remaines in the nature of man, and that which is naturall to us all even from our first Parents, that we would have the staffe in our owne hands, and support our owne soules, and supply all those necessities that lie upon us.

Now the way to make the soule leane upon CHRIST, is, to plucke away all other props; for the last thing that wee come to is the promise, and if we could find good any where else, we would never goe to Christ; God heares last of us, and there-

fore

fore wee ſhould doe with our ſelves as the enemie doth with a City beſieged, when he would make them yeeld, the onely way is to famiſh them, cut off all proviſion, and ſtop all paſſages that none may come to relieve them, and then they will bee forced to yeeld themſelves to the mercy of the enemy; ſo it is with our nature, we are ſtill truſting to our owne ſtrength, and relying upon ſomething of our own; therfore famiſh thy heart, and cut off all the meanes and comfort whereby thy heart may bee ſuccoured, and thy conſcience quieted, and when thy heart is famiſhed, it will then

seek out to a Saviour, and lie there, because there is no other thing to support it.

Mar.5.26. 27. The poore woman in the Gospel had spent all her goods upon the Phycitians, and if she had had but a little meanes left, yea, but one farthing token, for any thing I know shee would never have gone to Christ; but when all these failed, then shee was forced to seeke to Christ, that was ready and willing to doe any thing for her distressed nature: so our soules must have something to support themselves upon, for they cannot live without some support. Now therefore when

when all our carnall hopes are taken away, wee muſt needs ſtay upon the promiſe, becauſe we have nothing elſe. It is not required that a man ſhould caſt away thoſe outward comforts that GOD affords him, but onely this, that though you have all, yet labour to get your heart to ſee and acknowledge the emptineſſe of all theſe, and let not the heart ſeeke toomuch content in them, for theſe are all but lying vanities, & broken ſtaves, which will not onely cozen a man, but pierce him too.

Now when the ſoule ſeeth theſe things cannot ſuccour him, but lay him

in the duſt, then he will be content to have his heart ſevered from them. It is with the ſoule as it was with *Noahs Dove*, when the *Arke* began to reſt upon the Mountaine of *Arraret*, *Noah* ſent out the *Dove*, but the *Dove found no reſt for the ſole of her foot*: No queſtion there were many dead carkaſes, but the *dove* found no reſt till ſhe came to the Arke againe; ſo when a man findes no reſt in any thing the creature affords, and can get no footing for the ſoule to ſtay it ſelfe upon them, then it betakes it ſelfe to Chriſt, and goes home to the promiſe, and reſts there, and expects from thence

thence what is needfull; as in the Art of ſwimming, he that will ſwimme muſt pluck his feet from the bottome, and commit himſelfe to the ſtreame to beare him up; ſo wee muſt plucke our hearts from theſe things, & them from us; and though wee have honour and preferments, yet wee muſt not put any confidence in them, but learne by our beleeving to commit our ſelves wholly to the power of the promiſe, and receive comfort from thence onely.

Let not the gods of this world, *honour*, and *profit*, and *pleaſure* deceive thee; did the pride of *Pharaohs*

heart deliver him? did the riches of *Dives* ſave him? did *Herods* applauſe that hee had deliver him? did theſe gods ſecure them? nay, have they not left them in the lurch? therefore let us take our hearts off from theſe things, and have a baſe eſteeme of them, and ſee a vanity, and emptineſſe, and inſufficiencie in them, that wee may be forced to ſeeke to Chriſt, and ſay as *David* ſaid, *Helpe Lord, for vaine is the helpe of man.* Labour therefore to ſee the privie pranks of thine own heart, and hunt out all thoſe mazes, and turnings and windings of thy ſpirit, for it is wonderfull to ſee how the

the ſoule is ready to hang her comforts upon every hedge, and ſhift and ſhark in every by-corner for comfort: Now when thou ſeeſt thy heart thus ſeeking to ſettle it ſelfe, pluck away that prop, and ſee the emptineſſe of it, and then thy heart will be fit and ready to goe unto Chriſt.

Now when this is done there is a little way made that the promiſe may come to the ſoul, therfore labour in the ſecond place to have your hearts poſſeſſed throughly, and perſwaded effectually of the fulneſſe of that good which is in the promiſe, and of that ſatisfactory mercy and free-

2. *Meanes.*

neſſe

neſſe of the grace of God in Chriſt, that ſo the ſoule may bee eſtabliſht with that full content which is to be had in the riches of the promiſe. But marke what I ſay, perſwade your heart of it, and content not your ſelves that you are able to diſpute ſomewhat fully of the excellency of the promiſe and of the riches of Gods free grace; What is this to the purpoſe that the heart knowes this, and yet is fore ſtalled that it comes not to the promiſe? therefore leave not thy heart till it come to make that account of the promiſe, that the word ſaith it is worth; I ſay leave not thy heart

heart till thou ſee the promiſe of grace moſt beautifull in thy eye, and that thy heart may gaine ſome earneſt touching the goodneſſe of God, and the riches of his grace towards thee; and bring thy heart to know and ſee, that the promiſe is better than all the riches & honours that thou canſt have, or the world can beſtow, *They that* know thee *will truſt in thee, for thou Lord haſt never failed them that ſeeke thee:* This kinde of knowledge ever breeds confidence and reſolution, and perſwades the heart; Wee dare truſt a friend whoſe faithfulneſſe we have tryed; and reſt upon that which

Pſal. 9. 10.

which wee know by experience. The promises are of a tryed truth; seek from one end of the heavens to the other, turne all the Bible over, and see if ever any man leaned on the promise, and the Lord did not performe that which hee had promised for the good of his soule? *Except the Lord had beene my delight, I should have perished in my troubles* (saith *David.*) *My flesh faileth and my heart also, but thou art the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* Here lyes a great weight, and it is a worke of marvellous difficulty and great necessity, and therefore that thy heart may sit downe satisfied in the

Psal.119. 92.
Psa.73.26.

the ſufficiencie of the promiſe, I wil propound three rules how you may improve the promiſe for your uttermoſt benefit.

How to improve the promiſes for our benefit.

Firſt, labour daily to preſent to thy ſoule a greater good in the promiſe than thou canſt ſee any where elſe: It is a mans skill, and it ſhould be his endeavour daily to dogge his heart, and to looke what it is that the heart deſires moſt, and preſent a greater good to thy ſoule therein, than in all things thou canſt have elſewhere. We ſhould deale with our hearts as a man would doe with a corrupt Juſtice, when hee would have him to be on his ſide, the

the onely way is to bribe him; (though that is sinfull) yet it is good to bribe the corrupt heart with the goodnesse of the promise, that the heart may cleave to it, and long after it. Doe honours, or riches, or the applause of men, or any earthly pleasures offer thee content and satisfaction? then perswade thy heart there is a greater worth and excellencie in the promise than can bee had in all the world. Here is *an exceeding waight of glory*, hee that hath this promise shall be made a *King*, and shall have glory that will *never vanish*: doth thy heart hanker after earthly joy and mirth? thou shalt finde

finde a greater mirth in the promiſe, than in the cracking of theſe thornes; (and ſo I may ſay of any thing elſe) Doth thy heart hanker after riches? then tell thy heart that there are *unſearchable riches in Chriſt*, and through him we have title to all the promiſes of this life and a better; wee know hee that offers moſt for the bargaine hath it: therefore wee ſhould obſerve the goings out of our hearts, and what offers it ſelfe to give us moſt content, & preſent our ſoules with a greater good in God than in all things elſe.

Oh the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the

love

love of Christ, which passeth knowledge!

The consideration of this, as it works a longing after Christ, and the promises, so it should fill our faces with shame and confusion, that ever we should set light by such riches of mercy, and walke unworthy of so great salvation. Could wee comprehend the unmeasurable dimensions of Gods love and goodnesse revealed in his word, how would our hearts bee enflamed towards him? When the sinner thinks thus with himselfe, I that have done all that I could against so good a God, that my heart even bleeds to thinke of it,

it , there was no name under heaven that I tore in peeces but Gods name, his *wounds* , and *life* , and *heart-bloud* I have rent and torne a thouſand times. Nay , there was no command in the world that my ſoule ſo much deſpiſed,as the command of the Lord Jeſus. There was no ſpirit that ever ſpake to me, which I ſo much reſiſted as the Spirit of the Lord.Oh how many ſweet motions hath the Lord let into my ſoule , thereby to pluck mee from my baſe courſes & ſinfull practiſes. By how many mercies hath he allured me,by how many gracious promiſes hath he invited me, to forſake

sake my sinnes, and turne unto him? But I have flowne in the face of his *Ministers* and *blessed spirit*, and rejected all tearmes of reconciliation. If I had lyen in a dungeon, and beene plagued with torments all my life time, yea, though I had another world full of misery to live in, I should count it infinite mercy, so the Lord would passe by my sinfull miscarriages, and pardon these inward rebellions.

But that God should send his dearest *Sonne* to love mee, and that so incomparably, so inconceivably, that I could not possibly hate him, so much as hee loves and affects mee,

I could not ſo exceede in unkindneſſe towards him, as hee hath exceeded in tender cõpaſſion towards me? Were it not righteous with God, never to ſpeake comfort more to my ſoule, that have ſo lightly eſteemed his promiſe and word of comfort? Had it not beene juſt with GOD to take advantage againſt mee? Was it not juſt that I which lived in ſinne, ſhould have periſhed in my ſinne? Had it not beene juſt that I who have ſo much loved corruption, ſhould have reaped the bitter fruit of it long ere this? But that the Lord ſhould finde an enemie, and not ſlay him; nay, that

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that he should give his beloved *Sonne* out of his bosome to save him; is love not to be expressed. Oh the *height* of his mercy beyond my desire. Oh the *breadth* of this mercy without all bounds. Oh the *length* of this mercy beyond all times. Oh the *depth* of this mercy beyond all sinne and misery.

Labour therefore to have accesse to the promise with thy soule, and speake a good word for it, and say, Stand by profits, and pleasures, and preferments, roome for the Lord Jesus Christ, and put a wonderfull price upon the promise; this is an everlasting rule, whatsoever the

the ſoule doth account as beſt, that it will chuſe and leave all others for it. I would have the ſoule out-bid the world, and labour to out-ſhoot the devill in his owne bow, and thoſe things which the devill caſts in thy way, for hin dering thy ſoule from cõming to the promiſe, let thoſe things be as meanes to uſher-in the promiſe. As thus, when thou ſeeſt thy heart looke after friends, let thoſe friends uſher the way to think on the infinite love and favour of God in Chriſt; and when thy heart would faine hunt after wealth, let this uſher a way to the promiſe, and ſay, If the heart

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heart finde such content in riches, what would it finde in the riches of Gods grace in Christ? thus present a greater good in the promise than in any thing else.

2 The second rule is, Labour to convince thy heart of this, that all the things in the world without the promise are not good, and hadst thou all that the earth can afford without a promise, they were rather a curse to thee than a blessing. *Faith is the substance of things hoped for*, it gives a kinde of being and substance to all; there is no substtnce in honour and riches if they be not in faith; they are

Heb.12.1.

clogges

clogges & ſnares to a man, except faith give a title thereunto and a bleſſing therewith; all our prayers have no ſubſtance in them, but are poore and empty words without faith in the promiſe to have what wee pray for: the moſt broken and meane prayer, when a poore creature can ſcarce utter foure words with any ſenſe, yet if it be mingled with *faith*, is a very powerfull prayer; and the ſubſtance of all your hearing, and my preaching lyes in *faith*, otherwiſe they are but loſt labour, for faith is it that gives a kinde of being to whatſoever we ſpeake or doe.

The third rule in this

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second meanes, is this, Labour to acquaint thy heart with the goodnesse of the promise, before carnall reason comes and possesses thy heart, how that the promise is most sure, and will come when it is most seasonable, and is best for thee, and when God sees it most fit we shall certainly have it; Heb.4.16. *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that wee may receive comfort and mercy in time of need*; not when I see it fit, but when God sees it fit; this is it which carries away many poore sinfull hearts from resting upon the promise of God; sometimes the heart is a little affected with the excellency

lency of the riches of Gods grace, and seeth what great things the Lord hath done for his soule, and saith, Oh that I were such a one, and let me die the death of the righteous; but when it comes to passe that he hath not present ease and comfort, then hee casts away the good promise of the Lord, and the devill prevailes wonderfully with these poore creatures: Therefore saith the Prophet, *When the figge tree shall not blossome, neither shall the fruit bee on the Vines, when the labour of the Olive shall faile and yeeld no fruit, then wil I rejoyce in the Lord, and joy in the God of my salvation.* Saith the Prophet, Hab. 3. 17.

Comfort frõ the promiſe, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is then ſeaſonable, when I have moſt neede and may receive moſt good thereby; then ſhall I bee ſure to have the promiſe ſo to ſurprize my heart, that it may be poſſeſſed with the all-ſufficiency of it.

3. *Meanes.* In the third place ſee that thou expecteſt all the good which thou needeſt and canſt deſire from that ſufficiency of the promiſe; doe not thinke to bring any good with thee to the promiſe, but goe to the promiſe for all good; *there* are all the cords of mercy that muſt draw thee, and *there* is the all-ſufficiency that

that can ſupply all thy wants, looke for all from thence, and expect power from the promiſe to inable thee to doe whatſoever thou wouldeſt, and to make thee able to beleeve the promiſe.

It is a weake plea for a man to ſay, I dare not looke to the promiſe I cannot beleeve, if I could then I might expect ſome good. *Object.*

Thou ſhalt never beleeve upon theſe termes, thou muſt not firſt have faith and then goe to the promiſe, but thou muſt firſt goe to the promiſe, and from thence receive power to make thee able to beleeve the promiſe, *Anſw.*

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Psal.119. 49.

O Lord remember thy word to thy servant, wherein thou hast caused me to trust. When men are enlarged in love to a man, and make faire promises, this perswades the heart to trust to them, and to rely upon them for good; therefore a man doth use to say, I durst not have thought it, nor expected, if you had not promised it; so the promise of God made to the soule, makes the soule to rest upon it.

To expect faith without a promise, is all one as if a man should expect a crop without seed, for the promise is the immortall seed of Gods Word, whereby the spirit breeds this faith in

in the hearts of all that are his. *The houre is comming and now is, when the dead ſhall heare the voyce of the Sonne of God, and they that heare it ſhall live:* It is ſpoken of raiſing of a dead man from the grave of ſin. Firſt, there is the voyce of Chriſt to the ſoule, before there can be an Echo again of the ſoule to Chriſt; ſo the power of the promiſe muſt come to the ſoule, and wee muſt heare the voyce of God in the promiſe before we can returne an Echo again to the Lord; The Lord ſaith, *Come to mee*, and the ſoule ſaith, *I come Lord.* When thou ſeeſt much deadneſſe and unfitneſſe of heart, doe not

Ioh. 5. 25.

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thou goe away, and looke off from the promiſe, and ſay, Thus I am, and ſo it is with me; but rather goe to the promiſe, and ſay, Whatſoever frailties I finde in my ſelfe, yet I will looke to the Lord, and to his promiſe, for if I want faith, the promiſe muſt ſettle me more and more therein, I muſt not bring faith to the promiſe, but receive faith from thence, and therefore I will waite till the Lord pleaſe to worke it.

4. *Meanes.* Laſtly, labour to yeeld to the equall condition of the promiſe, and make no more conditions than God makes; now the promiſe requires no more of a man, but

but that hee ſhould come and lay hold on mercy; therefore do thou require no more than God in the promiſe requires; there is enough in the promiſe to doe thee good, therfore expect all good from it, and be content to goe to the promiſe, and take of God whatſoever hee hath therein offered. *Buy without money*; This is the condition that God offers mercy upon, buy wine and Milke, that is, grace and ſalvation without money, that is, without ſufficiency of your owne; if a man ſhould goe running up and downe to borrow money before he come to buy, he may famiſh before hee

Eſay 55.12

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come; so the Lord offers Christs mercy and salvation, and saith, Come take it without money, and wee runne up and downe to borrow money of *prayer*, and *duties*, and *power against corruption*, but you may be starved before you buy, if you goe this way to work.

Therefore make Gods cõmodities no dearer than God himself makes them, for this is the cause why many a poore soule is kept from comming to the promise: Oh, saith one, if I were able to master my sinnes and distempers as such a one can doe, than I would beleeve; this is to bring money; but art thou content to have Christ, and

and that Chriſt may have thee, and rule thee, and ſupply thy wants, and reveale thy ſinnes, and heale thy corruptions; then goe to the promiſe, & the Lord thereby will ſupply thy wants, and maſter all thy ſinnes and corruptions; but that muſt come afterwards; *When I paſſed by thee, and ſaw thee in thy blood,* (ſaith the Lord) *and behold the time was as the time of love, and I ſpread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakednesſe; yea, I entred into a covenant with thee, and thou becameſt mine;* (that is, you were content that GOD ſhould marry you in all your ragges) *and I waſhed thee with water, yea,* Ezek. 16. 8, 9.

I

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I throughly washed away thy blood from thee, and annointed thee with oyle, I cloathed thee also with broydered worke. First, hee marries the Church to himselfe, and then hee gives grace, and passeth over his estate to his Spouse. Were it not a wonderfull great folly, if some great King should make love to a poore Milkmaide, and she should put it off, and refuse the match till shee were a Queene, whereas, if she will match with the King, hee will make her a Queene afterwards; so wee must not looke for sanctification, till wee come to the Lord in vocation; for this is all the Lord requires of thee, to

to ſee thy ſinnes, and be weary of them, and bee content that the Lord Jeſus ſhall reveale what is amiſſe, and take it away, and that the Lord ſhould give thee grace, then the Lord will bring thee to himſelfe, and thou ſhalt receive mercy from him, and then all thy corruptions ſhall fall to the ground. To ſumme up the point briefly thus:

Firſt, when wee have pluckt away all carnall props, there is way made for the promiſe to come to us.

Secondly, whē our hearts are poſſeſſed throughly of the ſufficiency of Gods promiſe and grace, then the

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the promise drawes neere to the soule.

Thirdly, when wee expect all from the promise, even power to come to the promise, then the promise layes hold upon us.

Fourthly, when we are content to yeeld to the equall conditions of the promise, then the promise carries us quite away.

Thus we have seene the hindrances removed, and the meanes propounded, and now, that wee may be moved and perswaded importunately to seeke after this blessed grace of God, let us consider thus much; if you once get this grace, you get all other graces with it; it is a ground of com-

comfort to set a man a worke, when in the doing of one worke hee may doe another, nay, all works; so it is in the worke of faith, it should encourage us to labour for *faith*, because if wee get this wee get all: men that are wise to provide for themselves, and to lay out their money in a purchase for the best advantage, if they see it well wooded & watered, especially if there be some golden Mines, all their minde will be upon that, because if they have that they have all with it; so it is here, get grace and get all, strengthen this and all is strong, want this and want all, once get this, and you need

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Faith to be laboured for above all graces.

need not seeke for wisedome, for *faith* will make you wise to salvation; and you need not labour for patience, for faith will make you patient, and faith will bring holinesse with it to purge you, for faith brings all grace. Now the Saints of God endeavour with much paines to get grace, and to subdue their corruptions; but yet they are feeble & weak therein, because they take not the right way.

Many a poore soule mournes and cries to heaven for mercy, and prayes against a stubborne hard heart, and hee is weary of his life because his vile heart remaines, and yet happily

happily never gets little or any redreſſe: and the main wound lyes here. Alas, you goe the wrong way, for if you would have grace you muſt firſt of all get faith, and that will bring all the reſt; buy the field, and the Pearle is yours; you muſt not ſtand ſtrugling and ſtriving with your owne hearts, and thinke to maſter a proud heart, *that* will not doe it, but let faith goe to Chriſt, and there is meekneſſe, patience, humility and wiſedome, and faith will fetch all theſe to the ſoule. Brethren, if you ſet ſuch a price upon any of theſe graces, then labour for faith, get that and you ſhall

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ſhall have all; the Apoſtle ſaith, *Wee all with open face beholding, as in a glaſſe, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the ſame Image from glory to glory.* The Lord Chriſt is the glaſſe, and the glorious grace of God in Chriſt, is compared to the glory of the Lord; therefore firſt we muſt behold the grace in Chriſt by faith, before we can receive grace; firſt, ſee humility in Chriſt, and then fetch it there; firſt ſee ſtrength and courage to enable thy weake heart, and then fetch it. Would not you be content to have a meeke, gracious and humble heart? I dare undertake for many of you, that

1 Cor. 3. 18.

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that you had rather have it than any thing under heaven, and you would thinke it the beſt bargaine that ever you made; and you ſay, Oh that I could once ſee that day, that this proud heart of mine might bee humbled. If I could ſee the blood of my ſinnes, I ſhould thinke my ſelfe happy, and deſire to live no longer; then get faith, and ſo buy the whole, for they goe all together; you muſt not think to have patience & meekneſſe, without faith, but buy faith and you ſhall have all together: Would you have the glory of God, and be more heavenly minded, then looke to it, get

get it by the eye of faith, and looke up to the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, and then you ſhall ſee it; but hold you there then, and this will encreaſe all your graces, to your everlaſting peace & comfort. When men uſe to make a purchaſe, they will reckon up all, and ſay, There is ſo much wood worth ſo much, & ſo much ſtock, worth ſo much, and then they offer for the whole, anſwerable to all the parcels: ſo there is *Item* for an heavenly mind, that is worth thouſands, and *Item* for an humble heart, that is worth millions. And are theſe graces worth ſo much? what is

faith

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faith worth then? Oh precious faith, it will bring all graces with it, one degree of grace after another; grace here, and happineſſe for ever hereafter. If wee have any hearts of men, (I doe not ſay of Chriſtians) me thinks this ſhould provoke us to labour for this bleſſed grace of God.

FINIS.